

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2230

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

S E C R E T LISBON 1674

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH SOARES' CHIEF OF CABINET

REF: LISBON 1278

1. MANUEL SA MACHADO, SOARES' CHIEF OF CABINET, SPOKE TODAY (MARCH 24) WITH DCM AND POLCOUNS. NY TIMES EDITORIAL REPORTER BOB KLEIMAN ALSO ATTENDED PART OF SESSION.

2. WORRIED BUT HOPEFUL, SA MACHADO GAVE US A RUNDOWN ON CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION AS SEEN BY SOCIALISTS AND MORE PARTICULARLY BY MARIO SOARES. SA MACHADO IS CAREER FSO, BUT WAS SELECTED BY AND CLOSELY LINKED TO SOCIALISTS. MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

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3. SOARES ENLISTS EUROPEANS:

SOARES HAS BEEN CALLING HIS EUROPEAN FRIENDS (INCLUDING WILLY BRANDT) TO ENLIST THEIR SUPPORT IN CURRENT STRUGGLE BETWEEN DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS OVER CABINET POSITIONS AND AFTERMATH OF MARCH 11 EVENTS. SA MACHADO HOPES TO BE ABLE TO CONSULT WITH SOARES TODAY AND PASS ON TO US SOARES' IDEAS ON HOW ALLIES CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN SUPPORTING THE MODERATES IN THE CURRENT CRISIS. SOARES HAD JUST GONE TO SEE PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES FOR THIRD TIME OVER QUESTION OF SOCIALIST ROLE IN CABINET.

4. SOCIALIST POSITION ON CABINET:

SOARES IS TAKING TOUGH LINE ON CABINET, SAYING THAT SOCIALISTS WILL PULL OUT COMPLETELY IF THEIR POSITION DOES NOT GET ITS DUE. SOCIALISTS HAVE SUCCEEDED IN KEEPING SALGADO ZENHA IN CABINET AND OBJECT STRENUOUSLY TO PRESENCE OF MDP, WHICH THEY SAY HAS NO REAL STANDING AS A PARTY. PS ALSO FIGHTING GIVING NEWLY-CREATED AGRICULTURAL MIN. TO PCP. SOARES HIMSELF IS NOT WILLING TO BE FRONT MAN FOR MILITARY IN FOREIGN MINISTER SLOT. HE WILL ONLY CONTINUE THERE IF HE HAS A SAY ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY. SOARES IS WILLING TO ACCEPT ANOTHER CABINET JOB IF SOCIALIST DEMANDS ARE MET, AND WOULD STAY IN UNTIL ELECTIONS. IF PM REJECTS SOCIALISTS' DEMANDS, SOARES HAD TOLD HIM THAT PS WILL LEAVE GOVERNMENT AND EVEN GO INTO CLANDESTINE OPPOSITION IF NECESSARY. IF SOARES DOES NOT STAY IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, SA MACHADO EXPECTS HIS REPLACEMENT WILL BE MILITARY OFFICER.

5. INTERIOR MINISTRY:

IMPORTANCE OF MINISTRY OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION (INTERIOR) IS NOT ITS CONTROL OF POLICE FORCES BUT ITS CONTROL OF ELECTION PROCEDURES AND MONITORING. CURRENT MINISTER, COL. COSTA BRAS, IS MODERATE, COMPETENT AND FAIR AND WOULD DO HIS BEST TO ENSURE FREE ELECTIONS. DANGER OF PUTTING IN LESS COMPETENT MILITARY OFFICER SUCH AS LTC. INFANTE OR CPT. PINTO SOARES IS THAT THEY COULD BE MANIPULATED BY COMMUNISTS AND CHANCES FOR FREE ELECTION WOULD BE MUCH REDUCED.

6. PPD:

SA MACHADO SAYS PPD WILL ALSO LEAVE IF PS PULLS OUT OF GOVERNMENT.

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7. AFM PERSONALITIES:

-- PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES IS ON SIDE OF AFM MODERATES. WITHIN LAST WEEK HE TOLD SOARES IN PRESENCE OF SA MACHADO THAT HIS TWO OPTIONS WERE (A) RESIGN AND WITHDRAW COMPLETELY (UNLIKE SPINOLA) FROM POLITICS OR (B) STAY IN AND TRY TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO GUIDE AND MODERATE EVENTS, EVEN THOUGH HIS POWER HAD BEEN MUCH REDUCED.

-- ARMY CHIEF FABIAO IS MODERATE, WHO DEVISED ELECTIONS IN BRANCH COUNCILS (REFTEL) AS MEANS TO ENHANCE POWER OF MODERATE OFFICERS.

-- ALVES, ANTUNES, AND CRESPO WON THEIR FIGHT TO GET ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AFTER ADM. CRESPO SAID THAT HE WOULD QUIT AS MOZAMBIQUE HIGH COMMISSIONER IF AFM DID NOT THINK ENOUGH OF HIM TO KEEP HIM ON COUNCIL. ALVES, ANTUNES, AND CRESPO ARE ALL MODERATES AND GETTING THEM ON THE COUNCIL WAS AN IMPORTANT GAIN FOR THE MODERATES, WHO ARE NOT COMPLETELY WITHOUT REPRESENTATION ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

--CPT. VASCO LOURENCO IS NOT A COMMUNIST AND CAN BE COUNTED IN THE MODERATE CAMP.

--ADM. ROSA COUTINHO IS NOT A COMMUNIST. HE CAN BE FOUND SOMEWHERE BETWEEN MODERATE AND RADICAL WINGS OF AFM.

--BRIG. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO, WITH WHOM SA MACHADO HAS HAD PERSONAL CONTACT, IS NAIVE, UNTUTORED, AND EMOTIONAL. ALTHOUGH HE IS NOW BEING USED BY LEFT, HE COULD JUST AS READILY TURN AGAINST THE LEFT. OTELO IS ENTRANCED WITH IDEA OF HIS OWN POWER, BUT DOES NOT HAVE A PERSONAL IDEOLOGICAL POSITION.

--PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES IS NOT JUST BEING USED BY THE EXTREME LEFT BUT IS TAKING THE LEAD. HE IS IDEOLOGICAL IN HIS APPROACH AND HAS IDEAS OF HIS OWN ON HOW THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RUN.

8. POWER:

SA MACHADO DESCRIBED CURRENT SITUATION AS SURREALISTIC AND KAFKAESQUE IN REGARD TO THE VARIOUS CENTERS OF POLITICAL POWER.

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REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL HAS THE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND A VETO OVER EVERYTHING, BUT CABINET STILL IMPORTANT IN DAY TO DAY ADMINISTRATION. LACK OF TRUST WITHIN GOVERNMENT IS SHOWN BY FACT THAT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IS GUARDED BY PARATROOPS WHILE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IS GUARDED BY MARINES. NOBODY IN GOP IS SURE AT PRESENT OF WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY NOR WHAT THE EXACT POWER BALANCE IS.
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